started from the capital Changan in 399 A.D. with several companions for India. He went by land but returned by sea, reaching home in the year 414 A.D. His account *Fu Kuo Chi* (*Records of a Buddhist Country*) records his visit to India, Ceylon, and Java, but nothing alluded to can be America. This work has been translated by several authors into French and English.

Another ornamental species of the genus *Hibiscus* is *Hibiscus syriacus*, the shrubby althea of gardens, often called rose of Sharon. This species, the name "*syriacus*" notwithstanding, is

FIG. 27. Rose of Sharon. From *Illustrated Investigations on the Identity of Plant Names.*

actually a native of China and neighboring countries in eastern Asia, and not of Syria. In eastern Asia, it is common from Indochina and southern China in the south to northern China and Korea in the north. The common Chinese name is Chin, or sometimes Mu Chin (Woody Chin), and under various other names it can be traced to the earliest literature, such as the ancient dictionary *Êrh Ya* (Fig. 27). The plant bears pink flowers, much resembling those of *Althaea*, and these wither in a single day. There are also cultivated variations of white, purple, cream, shades of blue, and other colors and simple or double flowers. In some parts of China, the leaves are used as a substitute for tea. The

petals of the white flowers are sometimes used as a vegetable. They have a pleasing and rather slippery taste and are considered as a delicacy.

This species has long been cultivated not only in China but also in the neighboring countries such as Indochina and Korea. An old name for Korea, Chin Yüeh in Chinese or Kin-iki in Japanese, meaning "the land of Chin," is due to the extensive cultivation of *Hibiscus syriacus* in the country in former times (Matsuda, 1911).

Another species of Chinese origin is *Hibiscus manihot*, a tall herbaceous plant with yellow flowers, called Huang Chin (Yellow Hibiscus) in China. It has 5–9 deeply cut digitate leaves. It is much planted for its autumn-flowering habit and the ornamental foliage, and is a favorite subject for paintings. It is now widespread in the tropics and is naturalized in many countries. This is the sunset hibiscus of the modern florist's trade.

In southern China in Kwangtung Province, there grows another species, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, along the coastal regions; it is also occasionally planted as an ornamental plant and windbreak. This species is widespread in the tropics, in the West Indies, and the Florida Keys of America, but it is generally believed to be of Old World origin. This is a plant that was once seized upon by Cook and Cook (1918) to support their theory of pre-Columbian trans-Pacific communication between the Old and the New World. They claimed that the plant is of American origin but was carried to the Old World tropics by man. Merrill (1920), however, demonstrated that this is one of the halophytic strand plants that are naturally widespread and pantropical, and there is nothing in the distribution of the plant to support Cook's unfounded theory.

Mallow

The mallow cultivated in the Chinese garden for its ornamental flowers is *Malva sylvestris*, a species native to temperate Asia as well as Europe. It is commonly called Chin K'uei (Silk Mallow) (Fig. 28). A related species, *Malva verticillata*, the typical K'uei, or sometimes called Tung K'uei (Winter Mallow), was a most important and common vegetable in ancient times (Fig. 29).